

## The Pike|Pine Urban Neighborhood Council

Date: February 04, 2016

To: Michael Jenkins, Seattle Design Commission

From: John Feit, Chair PPUNC

RE: WSCC Expansion Public Benefits

PPUNC first engaged the applicant in October 2014 and is *the* community leader in commenting on their design and public benefits. We have provided testimony at 7 public hearings, hosted the applicant at one of our monthly meetings, and have met with and garnered enthusiastic support of elected officials at the city, county, and state levels, as well as with city staff, neighboring communities, and non-profits. We offer the following observations and requests for your consideration:

1. The CCX design along Boren Avenue is hugely disappointing: it is essentially a blank facade with a dearth of street-level activity and is a very bad neighbor not only when seen from Capitol Hill but also to future development that will occur when a lid over I-5 is built. The importance of this nascent pedestrian street should not be forsaken and it should receive the same level of attention and detail as the other frontages.
2. Pine Street contains an anemic amount of ground level activity and public amenities and needs significant attention as do Olive Way and Howell Street, which are dominated by automotive uses and windowless facades.
3. The latent strategy of creating a 'Convention Center' campus must be challenged. The right of way design and architectural emphasis is overly directed along 9th Avenue at the expense of surrounding streets, echoing the failures of the existing CC. A robust public benefits package can help ensure that this part of our city does not become a convention center ghetto.
4. The design is not fulfilling its potential for a civic landmark — especially given its unprecedented cost. Our community's consensus is that the CCX design should create the excitement one would expect of a \$1.45 billion dollar project, the kind of excitement provided by the Seattle Central Library, Central Waterfront, and Olympic Sculpture Park, whose combined costs do not come even close to that of the CCX.

5. We respectfully request the Commission to consider the following be part of the Benefits Package:

- Complete Plymouth Pillars Park by widening I-5 adjacent to the dog run; this will be the first, modest step in adding valuable open space to an existing network.
- Have the WSCC fund a comprehensive feasibility, urban design, costing, and programming study of a freeway lid between Pike and Olive Streets to include affordable housing, neighborhood businesses, and open space components. Such a study would be in the order of \$500k to \$1M, or more.
- Complete Terry Avenue to Pine and Minor to Olive; this will not only enhance neighborhood connectivity but also mitigate the major traffic impacts the CCX will create.
- Direct the applicant to create the kind of civic grandeur and empowering public realm its central location, program, cost, and impacts dictate.